

AN EMERGING WORLD POWER

Enrichment: History Challenges

The Spanish-American War—The War We Wanted to Fight?

The island of Cuba lies just 90 miles off the coast of Florida. In 1895, when Cuba rebelled against its colonial ruler, Spain, the United States became caught up in the story of the Cuban people’s struggle against Spain. U.S. newspapers sought to move the United States toward war by fanning the flames of anti-Spanish, pro-Cuban sentiments. These newspapers—known collectively as the Yellow Press—compared the Cuban rebels with the patriots of the American Revolution and horrified Americans with sometimes exaggerated and biased accounts of Spanish brutalities against Cuban rebels and civilians.

Amid the clamor for war, a few Americans spoke out against involvement in Cuba’s quest for independence. President William McKinley—the last Civil War veteran to serve as President—was initially reluctant to fight. Eventually, after the destruction of the *Maine* and accusations of Spain’s involvement in it, war seemed unavoidable.

Your assignment: With a partner, research events that led to the Spanish-American War. What could you have done to prevent the United States from entering the war? Discuss your strategy in an oral presentation.

Organizing Your Research: While researching your topic, you may need to search libraries and relevant sites on the Internet for more information. By organizing this information in a chart like the one below, you can maximize the efficiency of your research.

Website Title	Summary of Content	Publisher, Author, Date
“The World of 1898: The Spanish-American War,” by the Hispanic Division, Library of Congress	An introduction to the people and events surrounding the Spanish-American War from the beginning to the end; includes links to other pages and resources	Hispanic Division, Library of Congress, last updated: 09/14/1998

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Suggested materials: Poster board and stand (for chart, graphs, and other illustrations); map of Cuba and the Caribbean Sea; pushpins or map pins (to identify positions and routes)

Creating a Visual: Your oral presentation may include charts, graphs, or other visuals to help your audience understand. Below is an example of a table that could appear in a presentation about the Spanish-American War.

Arguments for Going to War with Spain	Arguments Against Going to War with Spain
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • • 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • •

Suggested procedures:

1. Research the key events that led to the Spanish-American War. Create a graphic organizer, such as a timeline, to list and explain these events.
2. Plan your strategy by brainstorming ways in which the United States might have avoided war with Spain. What could have been done differently? Outline your thoughts.
3. Identify key decision-makers in the buildup to war. Think about actions they could have taken that might have led to a different outcome. How could you have persuaded these key people to act to avoid war? Do further research if necessary.
4. Draft your presentation. Consider using excerpts or direct quotations from your research. Decide how to include a chart or other type of visual aid in your presentation. Prepare any materials you will present.
5. Organize your materials. Look for places where revisions or additions are necessary. Practice delivering your oral presentation with your partner, with each of you taking turns.
6. Consider closing with a question-and-answer session with the audience to discuss the effectiveness of your strategy.